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CHEPSTOW URBAN AND RURAL DISTRICT COUNCILS.

ANNUAL REPORT

of the

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

for the year 1946

CHEPSTOW URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

A N N U A L R E P O R T

for 1946.

Chairman: Mr. C.E.MORGAN, J.P.

Vice-Chairman: Mr. A.T.B.O'NEILL.

Councillors

Mr. A.W. Andrews
Mr. C. Hollins
Mr. T.F.H. Lang
Mr. A.T.B. O'Neill
Mr. A.J.Proctor
Mr. A.H. Thomas
Mr. H.I. Waters
Mr. W. Wyatt
Mr. D.H.Davies
Mr. J. Keenan
Mr. C.E.Morgan
Mr. J.F.Price
Mrs. S.B. Rees
Mr. W.Powell Tuck
Mr. E. Woods

Officers of the Council

Clerk: Mr. A. Gill

Surveyor & Sanitary Inspector. Mr. E.T.Williams, M.R.S.I., Cert. S.I.B. Meat & Foods Inspector

Rating Officer: Mr. G.J.Vincent

Medical Officer of Health. Dr. J.J.O'Reilly, M.B., B.Ch.D.P.H.

CHEPSTOW RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL

LIST OF RURAL DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

Chairman: C.R. Read, Esq., J.P.

Vice-Chairman: Mr. F.C. Walker

Councillors:

Mr. R.J.Anstey
Mr. F. Arnold
Mr. W.H. Baker
Mr. R.G. Benjamin
Mr. A.J. Bevan
Mr. D.T. Coleman
Revd. I. Davies
Mr. W.H. Gale
Mr. E. Griffiths
Mr. J.E. Hancock
Mrs. G.I.Heath
Mr. S.M. Hill
Mr. H. Hughes
Mr. L. Jelly
Mr. E. Johnson
Mr. Alfred Jones
Mr. Arthur Jones
Mr. W.W. Jones
Mr. A.H. Morgan
Mr. G.H. Morgan
Mr. R.A. Newall
Mrs. M.E. Paget
Mr. S.H.W. Paine
Mr. D.H. Parry
Mr. W.W.Powell
Mr. H.L. Price
Mr. J.W. Price
Mr. M.G. Price
Mr. T.H.E. Price
Mr. T.S.Rowlands
Mr. R.R. Thomas
Mr. S.J. Thorne
Mr. W.J.Titley

Officers of the Council

Clerk: Mr. G.D.Spearing

Medical Officer of Health: Dr.J.J.O'Reilly, M.B., B.Ch., D.P.H.

Deputy Clerk & Valuation Officer: MR. T.T.Birkbeck, F.A.I.

Chief Sanitary Inspector and Surveyor: Mr. L.Whittingham, M.R.S.I., M.S.I.A., Cert.S.I.B.., Certified Inspector of Meat & other Foods.

Additional Sanitary Inspector: Vacant

Water Inspector: Mr. H.E.Priest

Rate Collectors

Caldicot Collection District	...	Mr. R.A. Squibbs
Mathern " "	...	Mr. M.E. Smith
Shirenewton " "	...	Mr. F.C. Price

St. Anns,
Chepstow.

27th August 1947

To the Chairmen and Members of the
Chepstow Urban and Rural District
Councils.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I beg to submit my Annual Report on the Health and Sanitary conditions of your Districts for the year ending December 1946.

It is likely to be the last Report of a part time medical officer, for a full time official will shortly be appointed to take over the duties of a group of Districts and to act besides as an assistant to the County Medical Officer. For this purpose our suggested group is the Urban and Rural Districts of Chepstow, Monmouth and Abergavenney. These changes were under way in 1939 but were deferred until after the war.

In these circumstances I would like to acknowledge the consideration always shown me by the Members and Officials of the Councils during my twelve years' association with them.

I remain,

Your obedient Servant,

J.J.O'Reilly

Vital Statistics

		Urban	Rural
Area (Acres)	...	1550	42,459
Population	...	4993	9,356

Births

Live Births

		Urban M.	Urban F.	Rural M.	Rural F.
Legitimate		43	43	109	81
Illegitimate		1	4	2	7
Total	...	44	47	111	88
		91		199	
Birth Rate per 1,000 population.		18.2		21.2	
Monmouthshire Birth Rate		19. 9			
England and Wales		19. 1			

Still Births

		Urban M.	Urban F.	Rural M.	Rural F.
Legitimate		1	-	3	2
Illegitimate		-	-	-	1
Total	...	1	-	3	3
		1		6	
Birth Rate per 1,000 population		2.		.64	
Monmouthshire Still Birth Rate		.64			
England and Wales		.53			

Infant Mortality.

	Urban M.	Urban F.	Rural M.	Rural F.
Deaths in First Year of Life	4	1	7	4
Total (all Legitimate)	5		11	
Rate per 1,000 births	55.		55.	
Monmouthshire	47.6			
England and Wales	43.			

Deaths

		Urban M.	Urban F.	Rural M.	Rural F.
Total	...	28	18	52	49
		46		102	
Death Rate per 1,000 population		9.2		10.7	
Death Rate Monmouthshire		11.7			
Death Rate England and Wales		11.5			

Maternal Mortality ... Nil in both Districts.

	Urban	Rural
Deaths from Cancer	4	17
Whooping Cough	-	-
Diphtheria	-	-
Pneumonia	1	2
Influenza	4	2
Tuberculosis	1	3
Infantile Diarrhoea	-	-

SOCIAL CONDITIONS.

	Urban	Rural
Number of Inhabited Houses according to Rate Books	1,084	2,578
Rateable Value	£29,025	39,346
Sum represented by a penny Rate	£113.12. 0d.	£158.13. 8

Chief industries in the Areas:- Farming is important.

Generally speaking the land lying south of the Chepstow - Newport Road is flat and of good quality, that to the north tends to be hilly and poorer. An interesting feature is the market gardening schemes at Leechpool and Llanvair. There is a weekly market at Chepstow on Tuesdays. The crown forestery estates around Tintern are important.

Catering for the Wye tourists must be on a considerable scale, and these are certainly areas of great beauty and romantic interest; the Abbey ruins at Tintern are perhaps the most extensive and beautiful in all Britain. Representing an architectural masterpiece of eight or nine hundred years ago, it contrasts strangely with the wretched hovels in which many live around it today.

The semi-urbanised area around Caldicot is largely a railway community and considerable development in connection with the great Admiralty factory at Dinham is certain. Incidently the proposed Severn bridge which could not fail to influence development hereabouts is not likely to be undertaken for some years.

The Avon Aluminium Co. Ltd. at Caldicot Pill is engaged in making aluminium hardware and employs about seventy persons - mostly males. Chepstow is the headquarters of the Red & White Bus Services with large offices and works at Bulwark. The Fairfield Shipbuilding yard employs about 350 men in the construction of railway wagons and bridges, and similar engineering products, while Dendix Brush factory has moved into extensive premises in Lower Church Street and engages nearly 300 employees - about half of them males.

Prevalence and Control over Infectious Diseases

Notified Cases	Urban	Rural
Diphtheria	4	9
Scarlet Fever	12	10
* Pneumonia	-	-
Puerperal Pyrexia	-	-
Measles	-	-
Whooping Cough	21	12
Ophthalmia Neonatorum	-	-
Cerebro Spinal Fever	-	2

* no cases notified, but three deaths registered as due to pneumonia.

Cases admitted to Isolation Hospital

From our own Districts. Diphtheria 13. About half of which were unconfirmed
Scarlet Fever 18
Whooping Cough (complicated) 2
Cerebro Spinal Fever 2
Chicken Pox (complicated) 1
Incorrectly Diagnosed 2

there were also admitted from Monmouth four cases of Diphtheria and one Scarlet Fever

Diphtheria Prophylaxis

Number of Children Immunized during 1946		Urban	Rural
Preschool age	...	90	156
School Age	...	4	192

S U M M A R Y

1946 was an uneventful year where Public Health was concerned. There was no evidence of nutritional failure. In these areas anyway serious fatigue from overwork and overtime is probably to be found only in the most basic industry of all-running the home.

The housing situation is deplorable, all housing standards - even that based on decency - have had to be abandoned. The fairly hopeful forecast in last year's report proved far too optimistic and all those present at the discussion with the representative of the Welsh Board of Health will realise how dark the building situation is.

Building now taking place here does not compensate for the general deterioration of so much old property - practically no big repairs are being carried out, or can be carried out in present circumstances. To classify masses of houses as unfit for human habitation as one really could and should, is a very empty gesture until there is some prospect of the provision of better.

CHEPSTOW URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

SURVEYOR & SANITARY INSPECTOR'S ANNUAL REPORT to the Ministry of Health for year 1946.

Water Supply.

5 Samples have been taken for Chemical and Bacteriological analyses during the year and the Analysts' Reports were satisfactory in all respects.

Sewers & Sewage Disposal

The existing methods of Sewage Disposal (discharge into the Tidal River) have proved to be satisfactory throughout the year.

Refuse Collection

The second-hand "Bedford" lorry purchased during the war is still in service and has operated well but it would be better for the town and more hygienic if a properly equipped covered Refuse Collection Vehicle were to be obtained. One will probably be purchased soon.

Salvage Sales for the year are detailed below:-

Paper	17 tons 19 cwts.	£115. 2. 7
Cartons	No. 407	10. 3. 6
Iron	2 tons ¾ cwts.	4.11. 8
Lead	2 cwts.	2. 0. 0
Rags and Sacks	19¼ cwts.	9.13. 9
		£141.11. 6

Schools

No action has been taken re Sanitation during the year but improvements are desirable in the older schools.

Inspections during the year.

Complaints re defects	50
Reinspections to properties under notice ...	30
Inspections of Cattle Market	6
" " Shops and Food Stores ...	23
" " Factories	4
" re Rodent Infestation	4
" " Infectious Diseases and Disinfection following	26
Inspections of Dirty and Verminous Premises ...	2
" " Dangerous Structures ...	1
" " Refuse Dumps	4
" " Public Conveniences	8
" " Dairies & Milkshops	7
Interviews with Owners & Agents	12
Inspections under Building Byelaws during the erection of new Buildings	8

Notices Complied with :-

Roofs & Gutters Repaired	25
Drainage Repairs	7
Dangerous Buildings made safe	1

Notices Served

Informal under Public Health Acts	42

Shops Inspections

No additions or improvements to sanitary accommodation or ablutionary facilities were effected during the year.

Rodent Control

Several Minor Infestations were satisfactorily treated by the Council's Rodent Operative. No large scale treatment of sewers was undertaken.

Housing - The Housing Position to date 1st September, 1947.

A number of disconcerting factors have arisen to eliminate entirely the optimism expressed on page 8 of my Report for 1945. The Council had hoped that the initial scheme of 42 permanent dwelling units, built by traditional methods, would have been completed whereas in fact the position is as follows :-

Number of dwellings	in course of construction	...	42
do.	to damp course level	...	34
do.	to eaves level	...	22
do.	roofed	...	18
do.	plastered	...	12

The difficulties experienced at Chepstow are similar to those causing anxiety to so many Local Authorities and perhaps it would be well to touch upon the more important:-

Labour. Prior to the outbreak of war little building was in progress with the result that there is no local pool of building labour. Never at any time during the course of this Contract has the Labour force been adequate, in fact the number, both craftsmen and labourers, has never exceeded 50% of actual requirements. The restrictive practice, i.e. the prohibition of the payment by results, was also a factor which contributed to delay, and only in the last few days has the Defence Regulation been amended to enable bonuses to be paid.

Weather. The abnormal winter was responsible for a considerable amount of lost time.

Materials. The inordinate delays and difficulties in the supply of materials is widely known and there is no point in my going into detail.

The 42 dwellings under construction are as follows :-

4 Blocks of 4 - Maisonettes	...	16
4 Pairs of semi-detached	...	8
3 Blocks of 4 (Terrace)	...	12
1 Block of 6 (Terrace)	...	6

The dwellings are of pleasing design both internally and externally.

Second Scheme. Efforts are being made to proceed with the advance preparation of the site for a further 82 dwellings, and it is the Council's intention to let smaller contracts for the number which they will be authorised to build under the 'allocations' made at the Zonal Conferences.

Temporary Accommodation. The Council have reconditioned 12 Nissen Huts situate in the grounds of St. Maur and all have been brought into occupation. Communal W.C's and bathrooms, conveniently sited, have been provided.

The original scheme for converting St. Maur College into six flats was turned down by the Welsh Board of Health on the grounds that the cost was excessive. An amended scheme was submitted to the Department on the 24th June, 1947 but the Council have not yet received approval or otherwise.

Private Building. Six licences for houses to be built by private enterprise have been issued by the Council, five have been completed and the sixth is up to eaves level.

Housing Associations. The Red & White Housing Association Ltd., has been formed and the Council have entered into an Agreement under Section 94 of the Housing Act, 1936 as a result of which the houses to be built will qualify for the Exchequer grant of £16.10. 0 per house per annum. The Association intends to build 10 houses at Bulwark and approval for this number has been given by the Council and the Welsh Board of Health. Tenders received were turned down as being too high and the Association is now negotiating with the Builder for a reduced tender.

Milk & Dairies.

Number of Retail Purveyors on Register	...	8
" " Wholesale Producers on Register	...	3
" " " Purveyors " "	...	1

(No changes from the previous year)

Meat & Other Foods.

Voluntary Surrenders & Condemnations during the year.

Condensed Milk	...	60 tins
Tinned Fish	...	30 "
" Meat	...	12 "
" Meat	...	30 "
" Fruit	...	60 "
" Soup	...	12 "
" Jam	...	16 "
Smoked Fillets of Fish	...	20 Stone
Flat Fish Fillets	...	12 "
Round Fish	...	20 "
Shell Fish	...	2 "
Meat	...	10 Cwts.

Market

Entries at the Cattle Market for the year were as follows :-

Number of Markets held	...	26
Sheep	...	6,000
Pigs	...	1,212
Calves	...	1,500
Cattle	...	1,300
Vehicles & Carts	...	1,200
Ducks	...	70
Geese	...	56
Fowls	...	653
Dogs	...	1
Horses	...	6
Ferrets	...	10
Turkeys	...	20
Goats	...	6

Yours respectfully,

H. GEOFFREY BARNES,
Surveyor & San. Inspector
1/9/47

CHEPSTOW RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL

SURVEYOR and SANITARY INSPECTOR'S ANNUAL REPORT for the year 1946.

Inspections during the year

Dairies and Cowsheds	...	47
re Drainage work	...	89
Drains tested	...	38
re Water Supply	...	138
Visits re housing	...	195
re Vermin	...	16
re Infectious disease and disinfection	...	21
Bakehouses	...	4
re Petrol Licences	...	7
re Sewerage	...	47
Building Byelaws	...	30
re Nuisances	...	38
Post War Housing	...	37
Interim Development	...	46
Food Inspections	...	14
Control of Civil Building	...	64
Miscellaneous Visits	...	277
Council Houses re Repairs etc.	...	81
Post War Housing Sites	...	37

Work done:- By Owners after Informal Notices :-

Housing Repairs	...	8
Drainage Repairs	...	5
Nuisances abated	...	2

By Owners after Statutory Notices :-

Housing Repairs	...	2
Drainage Repairs	...	1
Nuisances abated	...	2

Notices served :-

Informal under Housing Acts	...	9
Informal under P.H. Acts	...	7
Statutory under P.H. Acts	...	3
Statutory under Housing Acts	...	2

Eradication of Bugs. Disinfestations have been successfully carried out at 4 premises during the year.

Housing.

Dwellinghouses inspected under P.H.Acts or Housing Acts	123
Number of inspections made for the purpose	195
Number of dwellinghouses recorded under Housing Consolidated Regulations	Nil
Number of inspections for the purpose	Nil
Number of dwellinghouses injurious or dangerous to health	Nil
Number of dwellinghouses not in all respects fit for human habitation	21
Number of houses rendered fit by Informal action	13

Proceedings under Sections 9,10 & 16 of Housing Act, 1936.

Number of houses in respect of which notices were served	2
Number of houses rendered fit by Statutory action (by owners)	2

Proceedings under P.H. Acts.

Number of houses in respect of which notices were served	3
Number of houses rendered fit by Statutory action	3

Proceedings under Sections 11 & 13 of Housing Act, 1936.

Number of Houses in respect of which Demolition Orders were made	Nil
Number of houses demolished	Nil

Overcrowding

No action has been taken during the year.

Building Byelaws and Planning

During the year 33 plans for buildings and alterations were approved, 13 of which were subject to temporary Licence.

Control of Civil Building.

During the year 168 Building Licences and 3 Maintenance Licences in respect of work of a total estimated cost of £19,321 were issued. In connection with these works 41 Certificates to Purchase Building Materials, 6 form M's, 11 Certificates of Essential Repair, 3 Certificates of Essentiality, and 12 W.B.A. Certificates for Priority of Materials were issued.

Milk and Dairies.

During the year arrangements made for milk samples to be taken, and producers advised, through the National Milk Testing and Advisory Scheme, remained in operation.

Meat and Other Food.

Condemned during the year and destroyed :-

Butchers Meat	...	430 lbs.
Tinned Meat	...	2½ lbs.
Tinned Goods (peas, beans, soups etc.)		25 tins
Tinned Fish	...	11 tins
Tinned Milk	...	21 tins
Dried Fruit	...	2½ lbs.
Butter	...	110½ lbs.
Margarine	...	18½ lbs.
Bacon	...	9 lbs.

Salvage.

During the year the amount of salvage material available for collection has continued to decline. The position is not confined to this district, but appears to be general.

Salvage sales were as follows :-

		£. s. d.
Waste Paper	...	48.12. 7
Bottles and Flagons	...	26.15. 9
Sacks and Rags	...	10. 8. 0
Jam Jars	...	9. 0
	TOTAL	£86. 5. 4

Water Supply.

The parishes of Portskewett, part of Caldicot, Rogiet and Undy are supplied with water purchased in bulk from the Chepstow Water Company, and distributed through mains laid and owned by the Council.

Throughout the year, quality generally, has been satisfactory, with the exception of one bacteriological sample which fell below a proper standard for a treated supply. Chemical samples were satisfactory.

Generally, in quantity, the supply has been satisfactory, the exceptions being the high levels at Undy and Brockwells, where the supply has become intermittent. A partial link-up between this scheme and the Magor & St. Mellons supply appears to be a solution and some action should be taken in the near future.

Highmoor Hill, in the parish of Caldicot, is supplied with water purchased in bulk from Newport Corporation. Quality has been satisfactory, but the supply at high levels has continued intermittent. Sanction has been obtained from the Admiralty to a connection with their main at Five Lanes, and the proposal has been forwarded to the Welsh Board of Health.

The parish of Caerwent, and parts of the parish of Mathern, are supplied with water distributed through mains owned by the Chepstow Water Company and the Monmouthshire County Council. Quality has been satisfactory but pressure has been poor on some sections served by the County Council mains.

The parish of Devauden is supplied by a scheme installed by the Council in which hydraulic rams are employed. Quality and quantity have been satisfactory during the year.

The village of St. Arvans is supplied by a small scheme owned by the Council. Quality and quantity of water have been satisfactory during the year, but plumbo-solvency has been noted.

Iron pipes are in use on this scheme.

The remainder of the district is served by small private water schemes, public and private wells and springs. The quality of water from some of these sources has been questionable and the provision of piped supplies appears to be the only satisfactory solution.

Proposals which should result in substantially improved supplies have been prepared by the Council's consulting engineers and submitted for the approval of the County Council and Welsh Board of Health.

Bacteriological and chemical samples of piped supplies have been taken during the year, and the results were as follows :-

Bacteriological:-	4 samples	(satisfactory	3)
		(unsatisfactory	1)
Chemical:-	4 samples	All satisfactory	

Mains Supplies

(a) Direct to Houses	No. of Dwellings	1,631	Population	5,708
(b) By Standpipe	" " "	92	"	322

Housing.

Many existing houses are in a deplorable condition, due in a large

extent to the inevitable dislocation resulting from the war years. It has been impossible to carry out what would have normally been classed as essential work of maintenance and repair, and when notices have been served they have of necessity required minimum repairs. Acute shortage of labour and materials persists.

A complete survey of existing housing conditions should have been well under way during the year, but owing to lack of technical staff and pressure of work, particularly in connection with the control of civil building, the survey has been unavoidably held over.

A measure of the acuteness of the housing situation has been indicated by the country-wide occupation of service camps etc. by "squatters". In the Chepstow Rural District camps at Tunnel Mouth, Caldicot, Caldicot Pill, Ifton Hill, and Chepstow Racecourse were so occupied and subsequently the Council agreed to administer them on behalf of the Welsh Board of Health.

The Council now select occupants for vacant huts after due consideration of applications received by them. Electricity supplies have been re-connected to three sites and gas has been laid on to one. Water supplies have been improved, numerous repairs carried out, and portable cooking ranges have been provided. A weekly charge is made.

The progress in post war housing has been very disappointing and building of new houses was not commenced during the year.

A great deal of work was done in an effort to get building commenced, but as the development of scattered sites in rural areas presents numerous problems not encountered in built-up areas, these in turn give rise to protracted negotiations.

Progress during the year was as follows :-

St. Arvans - 8 houses	Final lay-out and house plans approved and authority given to invite tenders.
Rogiet - 26 houses	Approval given to the site. Lay-out and house plans approved and authority given to invite tenders.
Caerwent - 20 houses	Approval given to site. Lay-out and house plans approved and authority given to invite tenders.
Caldicot - 22 houses	Approval given to site, and site purchased. Lay-out and house plans approved. Tenders invited for the houses and tender accepted. Subsequently successful contractor notified the Council that he did not wish to proceed with the contract.
Portskewett - 16 houses	Approval given to lay-out of site and authority given to invite tenders for 16 houses.
Mathern - 12 houses	Approval given to site and lay-out and house plans approved.
Itton - 4 houses	Approval given to site and lay-out plans.
Shirenewton - 12 houses	Approval given to site and lay-out plans
Tintern	Negotiations commenced for site.
Undy	Negotiations commenced for site, but scheme held up owing to difficulty in arranging for disposal of sewage.

The chief difficulty has been to obtain tenders from contractors at prices low enough to be approved by the Welsh Board of Health.

Refuse Collection.

This service has been confined to the parishes of Caldicot, Portskewett and Rogiet, but the Council has decided to extend collection to cover, as far as possible, the whole of the district.

A scheme was in course of preparation at the year end.

Rodent Control.

During the year the Council decided to carry out the Ministry of Food's N.S. 12 Scheme of rodent control throughout the district. Accordingly a rodent operative was appointed. For the purpose of working the scheme the district has been divided into six sections. By the year end survey work has been completed and treatments were well under way.

The Ministry's inspector has expressed his satisfaction at the way the scheme is being operated.